

If Umno is united, why the need to show Najib support, asks DAP leader
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DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang has questioned the need for Umno divisional leaders to put up a show of solidarity for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at a gathering next Sunday, saying it was proof that the party is in turmoil.

The veteran opposition leader said the meeting was "extraordinary" as its purpose was to show support for Najib, who is under fire from some quarters within Umno, such as stalwarts like former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Why is there such sudden change of political focus and climate in Umno? This is a reflection of the turbulent times in Umno," Lim, the Gelang Patah MP, said in a statement today.

He questioned if Najib would "survive" the divisional leaders' solidarity meeting in view of the pressures he was under, and noted that even Dr Mahathir had criticised Najib's administration by saying he would resign if he were the prime minister now.

Lim said Najib's weaknesses as prime minister were evident from failures in various policy initiatives, and cited the 1Malaysia policy, the New Economic Model, National Transformation Programme and the Global Movement of Moderates, as examples.

The DAP veteran also noted Najib's "host of problems" such as the RM42 billion debts of his brainchild 1Malaysia Development Bhd, the murder of Mongolian translator Altantuya Shaariibuu and now, the jailing of opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He also pointed the differences between Najib and his four brothers over the issue of their father Tun Abdul Razak Hussein's inheritance that was triggered by a New York Times report which quoted the Prime Minister's Office as saying that Najib's wealth was due to family inheritance. His four younger brothers, however, have issued a statement to say that their father had always been known as a frugal man of integrity.

"There is no doubt that Najib is facing unprecedented siege, both locally and internationally," Lim said.

Lim said Najib, however, was able to ignore attacks "as he seems to be a real paradox – one of the weakest prime ministers in Malaysia but a strong Umno president".

"He has been quite invincible in his power position in Umno, and there is no way the prime minister of Malaysia could be toppled unless the Umno president could be removed.

"So long as he remains untouchable as president of Umno, he remains untouchable as prime minister of Malaysia."

But Lim questioned if there would be a "sea-change in Umno politics" that would cause Najib's position to be vulnerable at the divisional meeting next Sunday.

The gathering of division heads on March 8 was announced by Cheras Umno division chief, Datuk Seri Syed Ali Alhabshee, who told The Star newspaper that 170 out of the 191 Umno division chiefs have confirmed their attendance.

"We want to show that we are firmly behind the prime minister and that Umno is not divided as suggested by some people," he said.

Lim also believed that Umno was trying to divert attention away from its internal problems by dividing the opposition Pakatan Rakyat through its push for a unity government with PAS, and by staying away from the Chempaka state assembly by-election caused by the death of PAS spiritual leader Datuk Seri Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat. – February 28, 2015.

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